(b) whether this proposed amendment to the Act calls for the enforcement of penal measures like imprisonment and fines for Government officials who block information from the public domain; and

(c) whether Government would also consider legislating a 'Duty to Publish' Bill, calling upon Government to put out all Government date/ Information in the public domain without waiting for specific demands from public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) With a view to make the Right to Information Act more progressive, participatory and meaningful, Government have decided to repeal 'The Freedom of Information Act, 2002' and enact a new law in its place following which 'The Right to Information Bill, 2004' has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004.

(b) and (c) The Bill contains a provision that where a Public Information Officer has persistently failed to provide information without any reasonable cause within the specified time period, he shall be liable on conviction to fine which may extend to rupees twenty-five thousand or a term of imprisonment which may extend to five years, or with both. A provision has also been made wherein every public authority shall constantly endeavour to take steps to provide as much information *suo motu* to the public at regular intervals through various means of communications so that the public have minimum resort to the use of the contemplated Act to obtain information.

Right to Strike

3187. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some time back, the Supreme Court of India held that Government employees have no right to strike and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have taken any action in the matter in view of the widespread opposition across the country from a cross section of the people against the ruling of the Apex Court; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir. In the judgement delivered on 6th August, 2003 in the case of

T.K. Rangarajan Vs. Government of Tamil Nadu and others, the Supreme Court has held that no right to strike whether Fundamental, Statutory or equitable/Moral Right-Exists with the Government employees.

(b) and (c) The said decision of the Supreme Court has been challenged in the Writ Petition (Civil) No. 465 of 2003 (Potluri Nageswara Rao & Ors. Vs. Union of India and Ors.1), which is pending before the Supreme Court.

VRS for Central Government Employees

3188. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a Voluntary Retirement Scheme in all Central Government offices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) No specific proposal is under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Ratio of Salaries of Group 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Employees

†3189. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the ratio of salaries of Group 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' employees, working with the Central Government in 1947;

(b) the ratio of salaries of Group 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' employees, and officers working with the Central Government at present;

(c) whether Government would consider to correct the existing anomalies assuming 1947 as the base year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (d) The ratio of salaries of Group 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' employees, working with the Central Government in 1947 with reference to the minimum salaries of Rs. 350, Rs. 275, Rs. 55 and Rs. 30 at these level is 70:55:11:6. This ratio with respect to the present salaries of Rs. 8000, Rs. 6500,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.